



LAKE
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CALL TO ACTION: Governments must focus on phosphorus at Winnipeg's largest sewage plant

News
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We need your help.

Today, the North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) Project Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from both the city and the province tasked with implementing an interim phosphorus reduction plan to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg, released an [updated plan](#).

LWF, along with our partners at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC), released a [joint statement](#) in response.

In 2019, both governments committed to accelerate phosphorus reduction at the NEWPCC. We're concerned that the upgrade plan released today still makes no firm commitments to reduce phosphorus before 2032.

As members of the NEWPCC Project Advisory Committee, we have identified two urgent opportunities to tackle the treatment plant's steadily increasing phosphorus loads and protect Lake Winnipeg well before long-term upgrades are slated to be complete:

- By April 2022, implement the recommended interim phosphorus solution to reduce phosphorus loads as much as possible within the constraints of the plant's existing infrastructure;
- By January 2021, commit to designing NEWPCC's new biosolids facility to address existing constraints and optimize the interim solution, ensuring that compliance with the 1 mg/L phosphorus limit is achieved no later than 2028 when biosolids construction is complete.

We are reminding the governments of the critical importance of phosphorus reduction at the NEWPCC, and of their promises to accelerate action to address the plant's #1 environmental impact: algal blooms on Lake Winnipeg.

We remain committed to our roles as advisors throughout this process. This role includes maintaining transparency and accountability, and communicating outcomes to the public.

Two ways you can help

Citizen advocacy has successfully moved this issue into the spotlight - and onto the agenda of local politicians. Once again, we need you to join us in speaking up for Lake Winnipeg.

Contact your elected officials

Decision-makers care about issues affecting their voters. Remind them of their commitment to focus on phosphorus at the NEWPCC and highlight the opportunities we've identified to achieve this.

Key contacts include:

- Manitoba's [Minister of Conservation and Climate](#)
- Your Manitoba [MLA](#)
- Your Winnipeg [city councillor](#)

You can call your elected officials on the phone, send them an email or mail a letter. Here is an example of an effective message about your concerns:

"I live in your riding/ward and am reaching out today on an issue that matters deeply to me: the impact of the North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) on the health of Lake Winnipeg.

Phosphorus causes algal blooms on Lake Winnipeg. I am greatly troubled to know that Winnipeg's under-treated sewage is the single largest point source of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg. I own a cottage on Lake Winnipeg and have seen firsthand the algae that plague its waters every summer as a result of phosphorus loading. This ongoing pollution cannot continue.

I understand the NEWPCC Project Steering Committee has released an updated plan for NEWPCC upgrades. This plan fails to focus on phosphorus:

- *It does not commit to implementing interim phosphorus reduction by April 2022, [as per direction from Winnipeg City Council](#)*
- *It does not take advantage of expanded biosolids capacity to optimize the interim phosphorus-removal process so that the NEWPCC can meet its legally required phosphorus limit.*

The governments of both Winnipeg and Manitoba have committed to accelerating interim phosphorus removal at the NEWPCC. Citizens have been calling for action for years.

I am frustrated by continued delays. As a lake-lover and a voter, I expect my governments to follow through on their obligations. I urge you to ensure phosphorous reduction at the NEWPCC is implemented as quickly as possible to achieve measurable results for Lake Winnipeg.

Please reply to let me know where you stand on this issue.

Sincerely,

Your name"

Remember to customize your comment as much as possible, and aim to be clear and concise with your message. A [printer-friendly version of this template letter](#) is available on our website – feel free to share it with your networks!

Speak up online

Social media creates new opportunities to influence change. Online networks are monitored by media outlets which can help amplify citizens' concerns. Politicians monitor social media, too: the more attention an issue receives, the more likely they are to take notice.

Get active on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram: connect directly with decision-makers and make your voice heard. Remind them that Lake Winnipeg matters.

Here are some tips for engaging in online advocacy:

- **Hashtags help!** Remember to make your post easy to find and track by using "hashtags." These specific keywords are based on common themes and are used to group content from multiple users. Popular political hashtags are #mbpoli and #wpgpoli. You can also join us in reminding leaders to #FocusOnPhosphorus to protect #LakeWinnipeg – or get cheeky by asking #WhatTheEffluent is taking so long!
- **Think visual:** Posts with photos perform better than posts with only text. Accompany your post with a photo of the lake, or an algal bloom you've experienced.
- **Don't forget to share!** LWF is active on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Like our posts, then share them on your personal networks to help spread the message.

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